



Technology Helps Redeemer Reach Higher for a Better Student Experience

Ellucian and TouchNet delivered affordability, Colleague compatibility, and strong product support to help Redeemer University modernize their enterprise architecture.

Student experience is a paramount concern at Redeemer University. The Reformed Christian-based school, located in Ancaster, Ontario, was founded in 1976 and currently serves approximately 800 students per year. When the school's 2016 functional analysis determined that outdated technology, manual processes, and limited e-commerce capabilities were negatively impacting student life, while at Redeemer, Redeemer's leadership acknowledged it was time for a change.

Len Moelker, the school's director of information technology, conducted a thorough evaluation of Redeemer's business, application, and technical architectures. He had concrete goals in mind as he began looking for a platform solution to improve student support. He also had clear constraints. "As a small nonprofit institution, we needed to watch our budget," Moelker says. Because the school used Ellucian's Colleague ERP, any new solutions needed to integrate with the existing system. The final across-the-board requirement for any new solutions was that their vendors would act as Redeemer partners and help the school achieve success. With his goals and restrictions clearly defined, Moelker developed a plan that would elevate perception of the university, improve functional access for all stakeholders, and ensure all updates were efficient, accurate, and reliable. The project that collectively addressed those goals, dubbed Reaching Higher, officially kicked off in October 2018. Both the point of sale (POS) and e-commerce solution project phases, which resulted in the implementation of Ellucian OneCard VIP by TouchNet and Ellucian Payment Center by TouchNet, went live in August 2019.

Selecting tools with an emphasis on compatibility

Thanks to the strategic partnership between TouchNet and Ellucian, Redeemer kicked off Reaching Higher by reviewing OneCard VIP as a potential solution, with the understanding that integration wouldn't be an issue. Moelker also knew the Ellucian-TouchNet partnership is based on a foundational alignment to a single strategy, which gave Redeemer not one but two partners with whom it could collaborate on its Reaching Higher project.

Ultimately, Redeemer selected OneCard VIP as its POS solution. OneCard VIP supports the school's goal of upgrading to a comprehensive platform that provides a foundation to conduct payment transactions in the bookstore, at vending machines, in the dining hall—anywhere commerce takes place. Redeemer also added the ability for students to manage their OneCard accounts via the self-service portal. This same portal also provides convenient fee payment access using Payment Centre, feeding directly into Colleague when the school implemented its new e-commerce capabilities.

Breathing life into Redeemer eCommerce

Following Redeemer's selection of replacement tools for its portal, internal CMS, and communication, the school implemented Ellucian Colleague Student Planning and Ellucian Ethos.

Once planning was completed and execution was under way, the Reaching Higher project team turned its sights toward improving payment processing. E-commerce wasn't exactly thriving at the school; outdated apps didn't talk to each other and often lacked modern automation. The new solution needed to integrate with the other new solutions already in place, usher in new efficiencies, be scalable and, above all, be reliable.

Ellucian Payment Center by TouchNet met all of the project requirements and became the first piece of Redeemer's new payment solution. Launched along with OneCard VIP in August 2019, Payment Center provides real-time student account balances, online payment processing, and PayPath—a module that enables Redeemer to recover credit and debit card-related fees. The Payment Center's proxy function is especially popular among students, according to Moelker, because it allows them to grant account access to parents, grandparents, or other authorized users who can then make direct tuition payments.

Goodbye, ineffective silos—hello, technology integration

"The implementation for Payment Center went very, very smoothly," Moelker says. "I've been in this business 38 years, and believe it or not this is one of the smoothest projects I've ever had." Post-implementation, Payment Center's functionality also improved ongoing record-keeping for the finance department, thanks to built-in, customizable dashboards. Planning an online store purchasing solution is still under way.

"Every Wednesday night, the majority of our students share a meal," Moelker says. "All these students need to do is walk by and tap their card, and they're allowed into the communal meal." Implementing OneCard has been very successful for us because it lets us move those many students in quite a short time.

"OneCard Mobile also represents a Redeemer success. The declining balance app simplifies campus commerce and is used extensively by students, faculty, and staff. On the back end, an easy-to-use dashboard makes OneCard management and reporting straightforward and simple.

Reaching even higher

Buoyed by their new solutions' ease of use and a 96 percent acceptance rate among students, the school is already looking at new opportunities to add OneCard payments to athletic facilities and, eventually, credential access for school dorms.

"We're very excited about using OneCard as a foundational product," Moelker says. "We're also working with TouchNet and Ellucian to build more bridges between Colleague and OneCard. Overall, Reaching Higher has been a great project for us."



TouchNet is a leading provider of integrated, comprehensive, and secure commerce and credential solutions for colleges and universities. Institutions of higher education rely on TouchNet to unify and secure payments, permissions, and other related business transactions campus wide. TouchNet's unmatched integration, transparency, and security gives institutions greater control over transactions, costs, and compliance, while providing greater operational efficiencies and self-service access to real-time information. TouchNet is a Global Payments company.

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